Book Linked to C.I.A. Anti-Allende Effort Sold in U.S.

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24—A book that has stirred controversy in Britain because of reports that it was commissioned by a propaganda vehicle for the Central Intelligence Agency was also published in the United States and has been on sale here since 1974.

The book, "Chile's Marxist Experiment," by Robert Moss, a well-known British journalist, is a highly critical account of the administration of Chile's late President, Salvador Allende Gossens, and appears to have been rushed into print between his death in September 1973 and the end of that year.

Representative Don Edwards, Democrat of California and the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights, said last week that publication of such a book in the United States could be "serious violations of the First Amendment," and that he had yritten the agency asking for an explanation.

"The First Amendment guarantees the 'free flow of information,' which is entitled to be unpolluted by secret government propaganda," he said.

Ban on Domestic Propaganda

Mr. Edwards said he was particularly concerned about the reported C.I.A. backing of the book because its publication here would appear to be a violation of the agency's own rules banning the circulation of C.I.A.-financed propaganda in this country, and because the book is "consistently insulting" to Senator Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho.

At the time of publication, Mr. Church

Rep. Edwards Says the Distribution Violates First Amendment

and his Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations were holding hearings on activities of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation in Chile. The purpose of the hearings was to look for evidence that I.T.T. and other American businesses, possibly in conjunction with the C.I.A., had channeled money to political opponents of Mr. Allende.

The investigation established that the Nixon Administration had used the C.I.A. to funnel more than $8 million to opponents of Mr. Allende.

The book was published in Britain in 1973 by David & Charles, and in this country as a Halsted Press book by John Wiley & Sons of New York, a major publisher of science and technical trade books.

900 Copies Reportedly Sold

According to Warren Sullivan, the president of Halsted, the company "imported" about 1,500 copies of the book early in 1974, and was not aware of any possible C.I.A. backing. He said that about 900 copies had been sold in the United States at $8.95 each. "It's hardly been a success," he said.

Last month in England, The Manchester Guardian reported that the book had been commissioned by Forum World Features, a now defunct news service that the newspaper described as a "C.I.A.-subsidized propaganda operation." It also said there was no evidence that either the author or the publisher had been aware that Forum World Features had any C.I.A. ties.

Dennis Berend, a C.I.A. spokesman, declined to comment on the book or on the reported agency ties to Forum World Features. In the past, however, intelligence sources here have privately acknowledged that the C.I.A. had subsidized the London-based news agency and used it to disseminate propaganda.

The news service, which distributed articles to papers in Asia and Africa as well as Europe, ended its operations in April 1975 at a time when Congressional investigations were being conducted into a wide range of C.I.A. activities here and abroad.

Extensive Role in Publication

According to The Guardian report, the arrangement with the C.I.A. called for Forum World Features to handle all the negotiations with the authors and to oversee the book down to the finished draft.

The newspaper also said that 10,000 copies of the book had been purchased by the Chilean military junta that overthrew the Allende government to be given away as a part of a propaganda package. One of Representative Edwards's aides, in fact, received such a copy free last week simply by walking into the Chilean Embassy here and asking for it.

Mr. Moss, the author, besides being a journalist, is also the director of the National Association for Freedom, a conservative group in Britain.